

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS ALMATY 004123

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/CACEN (JMUDGE); EUR/ACE (JMCKANE),
STATE PLEASE PASS TO USAID

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KZ](#)

SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH OTAN PARTY
ACTING CHAIRMAN

11. (SBU) Summary: Ambassador Ordway met with Acting "Otan" Party chairman Bakhytzhan Zhumagulov in Almaty on November 15. Zhumagulov, who is also chairman of Nazarbayev's re-election campaign, had requested the meeting. He told the Ambassador that Nazarbayev's rating is close to 70%, and the election results will bear that out. Zhumagulov criticized the interim OSCE report on the election campaign, saying that it gave the government no credit for its efforts to ensure the fairness of the campaign and poll. Zhumagulov characterized the overall political situation as stable, but identified Almaty, Astana and several other large cities as highly politicized. He outlined a campaign approach that involves little or no personal involvement by President Nazarbayev. End summary.

12. (SBU) Zhumagulov told the Ambassador that party-sponsored opinion polls revealed President Nazarbayev would receive in the neighborhood of 70 percent of the vote. (Note: an independent poll organized by the International Republican Institute gave the President a substantially higher rating. End Note.) Zhumagulov said that in its polling, the party often has to filter exaggerated results that show the President with better than 90% approval.

13. (SBU) Zhumagulov roundly criticized the OSCE's interim report on the election process. He claimed to have forwarded 120 reports of "violations" in the regions to the OSCE, none of which were mentioned in the report. He suggested that the OSCE was guilty of a double standard toward the authorities, because the report did not address alleged incidents where the opposition refused to allow certain people into their events. The CEC, he said, also got no credit for ruling that candidates would be guaranteed equal access to the media.

14. (SBU) Zhumagulov dismissed criticisms that oppositionists are unfairly denied access to venues for holding rallies. He said that even he had been told by local authorities in some cases that large, centrally located venues he wanted for a campaign event was not available, including in Shymkent, Almaty and Kyzyl-Orda.

15. (SBU) Zhumagulov also described the organization of the President's campaign. The Otan party and its pro-presidential coalition partners are committed to doing all they can to support Nazarbayev, although the President is not participating directly in the campaign. He gave a figure of roughly 28,000 activists in the field supporting Nazarbayev. With these numbers the pro-presidential campaign is able to reach even the most remote locations. The opposition's significant manpower deficit prevents them from reaching rural areas. Zhumagulov said the campaign has a different approach in the villages: instead of holding rallies, the campaign will find a respected, older member of the community to go door-to-door making the pitch for the President. In urban areas, the most effective approach is leaflets in mailboxes. Personal approaches, either door-to-door or by telephone, are counterproductive.

16. (SBU) Zhumagulov commented briefly on the President's decision not to participate in the November 17 televised debate with the other candidates. Nazarbayev made an official visit to Kiev that day, but in any event would not have participated. The party leadership did not see any reason for Nazarbayev, who enjoys universal name recognition and 70 percent approval, to appear in a forum with candidates "whose ratings are about a fraction of a percent."

17. (SBU) Finally, while Zhumagulov characterized the overall political situation as stable, he did identify Almaty, Astana, Pavlodar, Semipalatinsk, Shymkent and Ust-Kamenogorsk as the most politically active. He also indicated that the party was concerned about voter turnout, although he expected a minimum of 60% participation. His concern was most likely limited to the damage low turnout might do to public perception of the election's legitimacy, as Kazakhstan does not have a minimum turnout threshold for the election to be certified.

ORDWAY

NNNN